

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 IO-11 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00

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APPROVED BY NEA/P:GFSHERMAN

S/PRS - MR. FUNSETH (INFO)

H - MR. FLATEN (INFO)

EUR/P - MR. JERABEK

IO/P - MR. BLACHLY

NEA/ARN - MR. BULLEN

NEA/ARP - MR. AHERNE

AF/P - MR. POPE

NEA - MS. GRIFFIN

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY SANA

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

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AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMCONSUL DHAHRAN
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
USCINCEUR

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL, CINCEUR FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS
FROM DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN'S PRESS BRIEFING FOR
JANUARY 22, 1976:

Q. WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE AGREEMENT IN LEBANON?

A. ON THAT SUBJECT WE DON'T HAVE SPECIFICS AGAIN ON
EXACTLY WHAT HAS BEEN AGREED IN LEBANON. NATURALLY, AS
WE HAVE BEEN, WE CONTINUE TO WATCH THE SITUATION CLOSELY.
WE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE ENCOURAGED BY A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME
OF WHAT APPEARS TO BE A SERIOUS EFFORT TO ACHIEVE A
CEASE-FIRE THAT STICKS AND A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION IN
LEBANON WHICH WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO AND PRESERVE THE
SECURITY OF ALL LEBANESE COMMUNITIES.

Q. YOU USE A CURIOUS PHRASE, "WHAT APPEARS TO BE A
SERIOUS EFFORT." IS THERE SOME DOUBT THAT THIS IS A
SERIOUS EFFORT?

A. I DON'T THINK SO, NO. IT IS REPORTED TO BE A SERIOUS
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EFFORT.

Q. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE SEVEN POINTS ARE THAT THE
SYRIANS HAVE PROPOSED TO PRESIDENT FRANJIYAH?

A. I DON'T HAVE IT. NO, WE DON'T KNOW.

Q. NOBODY IN THE DEPARTMENT KNOWS, OR YOU DON'T KNOW?

A. I DON'T. I DON'T KNOW IF THE OTHERS DO. I CAN FIND OUT FOR YOU.

Q. DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY LEBANESE LEADERS HAVE CONSENTED TO THE SYRIAN PROPOSALS? FOR EXAMPLE, CHAM'UN. FOR EXAMPLE, PIERRE GEMAYEL.

A. I DO NOT.

Q. OR IS IT ONLY PRESIDENT FRANJIYAH?

A. I DO NOT. I SAY WE DON'T HAVE SPECIFICS, AND THAT IS ONE OF THE SPECIFICS WE DON'T HAVE.

Q. WOULD WE ENCOURAGE SOMEONE LIKE CHAM'UN, FOR INSTANCE, TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, CEASE-FIRE?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. I JUST CANNOT ANSWER YOU.

Q. YOU'RE SAYING TODAY WHAT YOU WERE SAYING YESTERDAY. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY QUESTIONS ASKED YESTERDAY FOR WHICH WE DON'T HAVE ANSWERS. TWENTY FOUR HOURS HAVE PASSED, AND TODAY AGAIN YOU CAN'T TELL US ANYTHING BESIDES THIS STATEMENT.

YESTERDAY THE QUESTION WAS ASKED, FOR EXAMPLE --

A. I WAS ASKED WHAT WE THINK ABOUT IT. I THINK THE QUESTION ASKED ME WAS WHAT WE THINK ABOUT WHAT IS GOING ON THERE. I DO NOT PRETEND TO HAVE, AS I SAID, SPECIFICS ON EVERYTHING THAT IS GOING ON.
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Q. WELL, CAN WE GET SOMETHING ON WHERE THE UNITED STATES IS DIRECTLY INVOLVED? IT HAS BEEN SAID HERE SEVERAL TIMES THAT WE, THE UNITED STATES, HAVE CONTACTED ALL THE PARTIES. WHEN WE ASK WHETHER THE PLO IS INCLUDED IN THE PARTIES, WE DON'T GET AN ANSWER. WHEN WE ASK HOW WE CONTACTED THE PLO, IF WE DID, WE DON'T GET AN ANSWER. WELL, IS THE PLO A PARTY TO THIS? HAVE WE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE PLO? HAVE WE DISCUSSED IT WITH THEM?

A. WHAT I MEANT WHEN I SAID THAT YESTERDAY IS THAT WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENTS. I THINK THAT IS OBVIOUS.

Q. OH, WE HAVE CONTACTS ONLY WITH THE GOVERNMENTS?

A. WE HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED IN THE SITUATION IN LEBANON.

Q. BUT THE SYRIANS HAVEN'T TOLD US WHAT'S IN THEIR SEVEN-POINT PROPOSAL?

A. I DO NOT KNOW. IF THEY HAVE I AM NOT AWARE OF IT.

Q. I WOULD LIKE VERY MUCH TO KNOW WHAT THE SEVEN POINTS ARE.

A. IF WE HAVE THE INFORMATION AND I CAN GET IT FOR YOU, I WILL DO IT.

Q. YESTERDAY UNDER SECRETARY SISCO TALKED IN AN INTERVIEW WITH USIS IN TERMS OF AN INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT PERHAPS BEING NEEDED. IS THAT THE KIND OF THING THAT SYRIA IS PROPOSING? DO WE CONSIDER THAT AN INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT, OR ARE WE INTERESTED IN BEING MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED OURSELVES OR WHAT?

A. THE ONLY WAY I CAN ANSWER YOU IS THAT WHILE EFFORTS ARE UNDER WAY BY INTERESTED PARTIES, SUCH AS UNCLASSIFIED

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THERE ARE RIGHT NOW, TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS I THINK WE HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE THE EVOLUTION OF THOSE EFFORTS BEFORE CONSIDERING IF THERE ARE ANY OTHER AVENUES THAT CAN BE EXPLORED. I HAVE SAID WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. I CANNOT GET INTO THE DETAILS OF THOSE CONTACTS. I THINK MR. SISCO INDICATED THAT THEY INCLUDED ARAB GOVERNMENTS, ISRAEL, AS WELL AS THOSE OF OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES WHO ARE CONCERNED.

Q. DO WE FIND THE POTENTIAL PRESENCE OF THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT IN THE LEBANESE SETTLEMENT HELPFUL IN TERMS OF THE ENTIRE MIDDLE EAST?

A. I SIMPLY REPEAT WE DON'T HAVE DETAILS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN REACHED, SO I CANNOT COMMENT ON ROLES WHICH MAY BE BEING ASSUMED BY VARIOUS PARTIES. WE ARE ASSUMING THAT ANY ARRANGEMENTS REACHED

HAVE TO BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE LEBANESE GOVERNMENT AND LEADERSHIP AND HAVE TO PRESERVE THE SECURITY OF ALL OF THE LEBANESE COMMUNITIES.

Q. YOU SAID YOU HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH SOME EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. HAVE YOU BEEN IN TOUCH WITH FRANCE?

A. I THINK UNDOUBTEDLY WE HAVE BEEN, AND WE CERTAINLY WELCOME THE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY OTHER GOVERNMENTS ABOUT THIS SITUATION, WHICH PARALLELS OUR OWN CONCERN.

Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY FIGURES ON ANY NEW CROSSINGS OF PLA PEOPLE FROM SYRIA INTO LEBANON?

A. I THINK WE ARE ABOUT WHERE WE WERE ON THAT. YES, I THINK WE SAID 2,000 WOULD NOT APPEAR TO BE EXAGGERATED. BUT I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO UPDATE THAT.

Q. JUST TO BE CLEAR ABOUT THIS WITHOUT GOING INTO THE DETAILS, HAVE WE ACTUALLY BEEN IN CONSULTATION IN ANY WAY WITH THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE POSSIBILITIES OF A SETTLEMENT IN LEBANON IN TERMS OF SPECIFICS, APART FROM WHAT YOU WERE SAYING YESTERDAY
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ABOUT THE INTEGRITY AND PRESERVATION OF LEBANON'S INDEPENDENCE?

A. I CAN ONLY REPEAT TO YOU WHAT I SAID BEFORE. WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WITH THE SITUATION. NOW, IT'S UP TO YOU TO MAKE YOUR ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED. I CANNOT DISCUSS THEM FOR YOU.

Q. THIS MAY HAVE COME UPSOMETIME WHEN I WASN'T HERE -- EXCUSE ME -- BUT WE ASKED SOMETIME BACK FOR A LIST OF THE BIDS FOR THOSE COMPANIES PARTICIPATING OR BIDDING FOR THE WORK IN THE SINAI PENINSULA. DO YOU KNOW WHETHER THOSE ARE AVAILABLE?

A. YES, WE CHECKED INTO THAT, AND I AM INFORMED THAT THERE IS NO REQUIREMENT THAT THE BIDS OR BIDDERS BE PUBLISHED, THAT IT IS A DISCRETIONARY DECISION ON THE PART OF -- I THINK IN THIS CASE THE DIRECTOR OF THE SINAI SUPPORT MISSION. AND THAT WAS HIS DECISION NOT TO DISCUSS OTHER BIDDERS OR BIDS.

Q. ON WHAT BASIS DID HE MAKE THAT DISCRETIONARY DECISION? WHAT IS HIS RATIONALE?

A. I THINK YOU OUGHT TO ASK HIM THAT.

Q. IN THE PAST THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT HAS ROUTINELY MADE THAT SORT OF INFORMATION AVAILABLE.

A. AS I SAY, IT IS A DISCRETIONARY DECISION. I THINK
HE FEELS THAT IT IS -- REALLY, I WOULD RATHER YOU
ASKED HIM THAT QUESTION. I REALLY CANNOT SPEAK FOR HIM.
"DISCRETIONARY" IMPLIES CERTAIN THINGS. I THINK YOU
MIGHT DEDUCE FROM THAT WHAT THE REASONS MIGHT BE. BUT
I THINK YOU OUGHT TO CONFIRM IT, TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT.

ROBINSON

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